

HINDING THEIR NETS

Northern Neck Fishermen Getting Ready for Spring.

MAY MILES OF SEINE.

Boats Big and Little—How the Fishing Industry is Conducted—A Falling Out—Lost His Oysters—General Notes.

COMORN, KING GEORGE COUNTY, VA., February 1.—(Special.)—Tide, hail, shine, or blow, the first week in February finds many a Potomac fisherman overhauling his seines, nets, boats, and other paraphernalia, preparatory to the spring fishery. And to them set things in order is no trifling undertaking. Many miles of seine must be mended and taired, many nets repaired and "honed," and the boats, from the lookout-man's tiny skiff to the huge seine-boat, which is propelled by twenty-four able-bodied men, must all be inspected and put in perfect order for the season so soon to open.

Fishing on the Potomac is a business of no inconsiderable magnitude, and affords lucrative employment for a goodly number of men and boys, who know but little about farm-work and who would be idle but for this important enterprise. However, many of the seine fisheries are not now operated on as extensive a scale as they were in years gone by. Several dozen strong men and half a dozen horses, with a well-equipped outfit, now successfully operate the average small fishery. Years ago from seventy-five to 100 picked men and a couple of dozen horses were required to operate a first-class Potomac spring fishery. A seine two miles long was placed on a platform in the rear end of a large boat. One end of the seine was attached to huge ropes, "made fast" on the shore, and twenty-seven to thirty men would start out with the boat to "lay the seine out." After a circuit of several miles the boat and crew would return to a point on the shore, some distance below the starting point. Hopes attached to the last end of the seine were then "made fast" to a capstan, a machine to which were levered a number of horses were attached. For hours and hours the horses tugged at this machine, steadily winding in the great net laden with thousands—sometimes millions—of fish of nearly every variety in the Potomac waters. The intense excitement and wild hurrahs at the moment when the immense seine and its burden would first come in sight may be better imagined than described.

BOUGHT THEIR SUPPLIES.

When railroad facilities were meagre and imperfect it was a common custom for the people of Piedmont and the Valley of Virginia to come down here every spring in large covered four-horse wagons to buy their annual supply of the proverbial "Potomac herrings." Then it was no uncommon thing for a train of these "mountain wagons" to camp all night near the fishing shore, and while the jovial Piedmont citizens waited for "their turn" to come, or for a "haul" to be made in order to fill their orders, the proprietor of the fishery would feast them not only on the "fat of the land," but the best that the water contained, and "old rye" in abundance. Of course, in many respects the habits and customs have changed, and the Potomac fishery of to-day is not what it was twenty years ago, but even now it's a "monstrously" to people residing far away from the Potomac. The outfalls of to-day are no longer the large covered four-horse wagons sold readily for \$20 per hundred, and when it was not uncommon to catch fish weighing from thirty to fifty pounds each. The largest seine on the Potomac several years ago was said to be six miles long, and was drawn in to the shore by means of a steam engine. The largest in this section now can be drawn ashore, when full of fish, by perhaps thirty or forty men and a few horses. The present fishery is more profitable. The low price of fish prior to Christmas discouraged many of the fishermen, and the business was suspended until the time arrived to make preparations for the spring fishery.

SUNDAY TRANSPORTATION.

The bill recently offered in the House of Representatives in relation to railroad and steamboat traffic on Sunday attracted a great deal of attention in this section of the State. For some years past the Potomac steamboat wharves in this country have been crowded with passengers, shippers, and freight nearly every Sunday. At times a large quantity of freight is handled on Sundays here than on any other day in the week. The public highways leading to the wharves are frequently crowded with wagons, carts, etc., carrying produce to and from the wharves. Not only light freight, but cattle, sheep, pigs, and grain are hauled and shipped by the Potomac steamers nearly every Sunday during the shipping season.

Grip is epidemic in the county just now, and a number of our people are confined to their beds with it.

Mrs. C. N. Farmer, of Uptonburg, this county, is critically ill with pneumonia.

Mr. W. Y. Morgan, editor of the Northern Neck News, has been quite sick. It is hoped by the whole people of the Neck that he will speedily recover.

There are many complaints throughout the Northern Neck about irregularities or carelessness in connection with the United States Mail Service. Newspapers are frequently several days behind time, and letters are sometimes two or three days going three or four miles. This unpardonable trouble is more prevalent in the lower counties of the Neck, but this county is not entirely exempt from it, for occasionally Sunday's Dispatch does not reach this place till Tuesday.

FARM-WORK.

General farm-work is well advanced for this season of the year. Farmers, fearing a repetition of last February's inclement weather, are clearing and ploughing their corn-land as rapidly as possible. A larger acreage of land has been ploughed up to this time than was ploughed up to the middle of March last year.

Notwithstanding the fine rains of last week and the continued open, mild weather, wheat, oats, and grass are still very backward and unprosperous.

Mr. Henry W. Edwards, one of the most prominent and extensive agriculturists of Stafford county, is under medical treatment at the Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore. This is the second time that Mr. Edwards's health has necessitated treatment at the Johns Hopkins.

Mrs. E. B. Whitehouse, of "Green Heights," this county, is extremely ill, and is being attended by Dr. M. W. Minor, of this place. Her mother, Mrs. J. F. Hayes, was summoned to her bedside several days ago.

"Leap-Year" parties have been the order of the day for a week or two past, and these entertainments, novel in this section, have so far proved very popular among the young folks.

Owing to the warm weather, Captain J. T. Emmertsen, an oysterman well known here, lost a vessel-load of oysters a few days ago. The Captain caught a greater part of his load of oysters, and bought a sufficient quantity to fill his vessel. On arriving in market he found that the whole cargo had spoiled while en route, entailing upon him a very heavy loss.

Sportsmen and others who have traversed all the fields and forests here this winter report that but very few coveys of partridges have been found in the whole county. It is said that in some sections of the county there is not a partridge in a radius of five miles, and that some of the other varieties of birds are nearly as scarce. Perhaps the most peculiar feature connected with the scarcity of partridges is that a majority of the few which survived last winter's severity

are male birds. It has been estimated by some hunters that of the partridges now to be found here at least four-fifths are "roosters." The number of snow-birds, sparrows, bluebirds, etc., observed here now is the smallest ever before known in this section. It is quite evident, upon careful investigation, that these varieties perished, as did the partridges, last winter, and that the crow and buzzard were about the only birds that survived that memorable season.

WYTHEVILLE.

A Slight Diphtheria Scare—Social and Personal Mention.

WYTHEVILLE, VA., February 1.—(Special.)—The appearance of diphtheria in a negro family in the town the first of the week caused something of a scare, especially when two of the five children stricken with the disease died within thirty-six hours.

A meeting of the Board of Health was called, the house was promptly quarantined; and the School Board was advised to close the negro public school for a while, as the children who had died had been pupils in the school. This was done, but no new cases have appeared and all apprehension is subsiding. Wytheville has a wonderful record as far as epidemics go, and if grip is expected, Her middle-aged inhabitants cannot recall the spread of any disease to an extent which could be called an epidemic. Scarlet-fever and diphtheria appear only occasionally, and have never been known to spread, while even measles and whooping-cough make poor headway in this pure mountain atmosphere.

The boy, Christopher Thompson, who was operated on for appendicitis last week by Dr. William H. Hoboken, assisted by other physicians of the town, is doing well and will doubtless recover.

We are enjoying springlike weather, and the buds of the aspen trees are swelling. This time last year the ground was covered with snow.

APPROACHING MARRIAGE.

Cards are out to the marriage of Miss Bertha Krenning to Mr. James Brown (of Ohio) at high noon on February 12th, in the Presbyterian church. Miss Bertha is the only daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William P. Krenning, who moved to Wytheville from Ohio several years ago.

She is a lovable and attractive young lady, and has been the leader of the Presbyterian choir for some months. Her departure for her western home will be a loss to the community and to her church.

The Whist Club was entertained Friday evening by Mr. and Mrs. Ewald, at his mother's home, and he proved a very gracious host.

Miss Ella Ewald was the hostess of the Thursday Club this week. Musical selections were rendered by Miss Ewald, Mrs. Campbell, and Miss Dunn, and an interesting paper on "Modern Illustrating and the Making of Posters" was read by Miss Fannie Fulton.

VERY AMUSING.

The Social Club met with Mr. and Mrs. W. S. Poage Thursday evening. The parlors were beautifully decorated with palms, ferns, and blooming plants. A merry game of matching quotations served well to mingle the guests and to banish all formality.

Partners for supper were paired by an amusing method. The gentlemen were taken across the hall to the sitting-room where they donned dominoes and masquerade. They were then marched back to the parlors, and the ladies bid for them one by one. The result was very satisfactory, since among such a charming collection of masculine ladies could not be paired amies.

The supper was beautifully served at comfortable folding tables, each of which was decorated with flowers and lighted with candleabra.

The marriage of Miss Sece Withers to Mr. John Y. Terry, of Seattle, will take place in the Episcopal church at 6 o'clock on February 23, and will be officiated by the Rev. Mr. Withers, who will celebrate on that same evening at their home their golden wedding.

Mrs. Henry Cook, of Massie's Mills; Mrs. Stephen Poole, of Blount; Mrs. Ambler and child, of Amherst, and Miss Williams are among the children and grandchildren of Colonel Withers already here. Mrs. Ambler's child is the fourth grandchild.

Major and Mrs. W. C. Sanders have returned from a visit to their son in Knoxville, Tenn.

OUR OFFER TO FARMERS.

Frequently within the past year or two the Dispatch has called the attention of our farmers to the importance of the cultivation of bright tobacco. There are thousands of acres of land classified as poor, idle, and unproductive, which could be made to yield most gratifying results from such cultivation. The experiment in South Carolina upon similar lands has been wonderfully successful. The Tobacco Trade here have been aroused to the importance of this subject, and are urging our farmers who now grow no tobacco to engage in the production of this staple.

It is a source of gratification to us that this important question, the growing of bright tobacco, is beginning to receive attention from our farmers and the trade, and in order to stimulate enterprise and furnish needed information to planters the Dispatch offers four premiums of \$20, \$25, \$35, and \$10, respectively, for the four Virginia or North Carolina crops of 1896 of highest merit sold in the city of Richmond.

A committee on awards will be duly appointed from the Tobacco Trade. Competition will be open alone to farmers of Virginia and North Carolina, and only to those who engage in this industry for the first time this year, and who announce their intention to the Dispatch Company of competing on or before the 1st of August, 1896.

In connection with the offer of prizes we propose to publish a series of articles on the culture and curing of bright tobacco, from the planting of the seed till the leaf is ready for market. The first article will appear next week.

We further offer as a premium to any one sending in (cash in full) a two months' subscription to the Daily or a year's subscription to the Weekly Dispatch one ounce of the best bright-tobacco seed—sufficient to plant several acres. This will enable subscribers to get at the same time seed for planting and the benefit of our series of valuable articles on the culture of bright tobacco. Address: EDITOR OF THE TOBACCO DEPARTMENT, Dispatch office, Richmond, Va.

Constipation

is the most common form of Dyspepsia. Dr. Deane's Dyspepsia Pills (white wrapper), cure the most obstinate cases. They contain no mercury, do not purge nor grip, and impart a natural healthful tone to the stomach and bowels.

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GIRLS FOR THE NAVY.

New Jersey Has a Naval Guard of Women.

ALL PATRIOTS AND JINGOES.

Their Captain—They Have Taken an Oath to Protect the Stars and Stripes at the Risk of Life—The Surgeon.

(Correspondence of the Dispatch.)

NEW YORK, February 1.—The darkness of the war-clouds which have been hovering over all the great nations for the past month or so has completely shrouded the new woman into the background, and no one has seemed to think it of sufficient importance to ask what that wonderful creature would do in event of hostilities.

Since the days of the wicked but martial Queen of Babylon many women have dotted the pages of war's history, and if the opportunity were given the athletic womanhood of to-day, there is little doubt that some mighty soldiers would go marching into battle, wearing bloomers, knickerbockers, or skirts, as their varied inclinations prompted.

This may seem far-fetched, but a number of young women in Hoboken could

stars. The uniforms of the regulars is a very pretty sailor suit, including a blue skirt, with three bands of white braid at the bottom, a regular sailor blouse, with a white flannel yoke bearing a miniature flag, and a round sailor hat similar to that worn by the sailors in the navy. The band of the hat bears the letters "Y. L. N. G." The uniform of the officers differs from that of the rank and file. Instead of a blouse the officers wear a light-fitting coat trimmed with gold braid, and bearing the usual emblems denoting the rank of the wearer. This is topped off with a pretty cap.

THE SURGEON.

The list of officers is complete. The Guards have a surgeon in Miss Carrie Smith, a tall, handsome young girl, who is a medical graduate and a regular M. D. At the drills she always appears with a business-like hatchet filled with surgical instruments, bandages, and elixirs, so that if necessity should demand she could either cut off an arm or bandage a sabre cut in no time.

Lillian Phillips, an English girl by birth, but an American by choice, is the paymaster. She is known as the greatest Jungo and the hardest worker in the Guards. She collects the dues of 50 cents a month from each of the members, and attends to all the disbursements. She never allows any of the navy girls to get into arrears. She is so enthusiastic that three of her sisters contracted the war spirit and joined the Guards. The youngest, Miss Daisy Phillips, has just passed her thirteenth birthday, and she is the official messenger of the company.

There is no limit to the patriotism of the paymaster. Here is what she said shortly after the organization of the Guards, and she says it is as true now as it was then:

"This country is good enough for any-

body, and I think more of the American flag than I do of my life. I'd be ready to die at any time fighting for the red, white, and blue. My mother, to tease me, sings a song about the Queen. Then we four girls begin singing 'America.' I have my room at home decorated with American flags, and a big American flag hangs from the head of the bed. I like to look at it the last thing before closing my eyes at night, and I want to see it the first thing in the morning. My father is a dyed-in-the-wool Englishman, and I keep telling him he ought to have stayed in England. But I would start from my family any time to fight for Old Glory. My body may be English, but my soul is American."

That is a good sentiment, strong enough to please the biggest Jungo that ever lived.

There is an officer of the deck, a girl of French descent, named Emily Le Gras. She is a fine speaker, and in her school days gained fame by her patriotic utterances. She looked forward to the time when the officer of the deck will not parade about the floor of a Masonic meeting-room, but upon the quarter-deck of a regular man-of-war.

Some of the girls in the Guards are talking about trying to induce the State of New Jersey to receive them into the National Guard as a branch of the naval militia. But the older heads say that the time is not yet ripe for such a progressive step, and they are holding back with the idea of making haste slowly.

However, should the country ever become mixed up in a war, it would be a matter of more than incidental interest to watch the doings of the Young Lady Naval Guards.

Roanoke and Southern.

(Baltimore Sun.)

Terms have been agreed upon by which the Roanoke and Southern railroad will be absorbed in the reorganization of the Norfolk and Western system.

The bonds of the Roanoke and Southern, which are principally held in Baltimore, were deposited with the Mercantile Trust and Deposit Company. Negotiations for a settlement are being carried on by that company.

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